



TOWN OF BERLIN

Office of the Mayor
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Mayor

Planning & Development Committee February 1, 2013

Given the ongoing budgetary pressures on the State and municipalities, Connecticut must act now to relieve some of the burden on our small towns and cities. Unfortunately, efforts to control municipal costs are often frustrated by state mandates that make it almost impossible to reduce budgets or negotiate savings in health care, pension and wage costs.

I support the following efforts to help relieve Connecticut's towns and cities from burdensome unfunded mandates:

1. UNFUNDED MANDATES

Unfunded mandates place an unfair fiscal burden on towns. Municipalities are facing staggering financial challenges because of their over-reliance on property taxes to pay for essential public services. Given the current and extraordinary fiscal challenges facing municipalities, towns simply cannot afford any new unfunded mandates. I support the numerous proposals before the committee that would **require any new or expanded unfunded mandate be adopted by a 2/3 legislative majority, including HB-5097, HB-5099, HB-5101, HB-5172, HB-5241, HB-5273, HB-5274, HB-5438, HB-5439, HB-5528, HB-5529, and SB-223.**

2. REDUCE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE POSTING OF LEGAL NOTICES

I support **SB-143, HB-5530, and HB-5532** which recognizes that municipal websites are the most appropriate, accessible place to provide the public with information on various legal notices. The bill will also save towns much-needed revenues because it costs thousands of dollars per year to publish legal notices in the newspapers. Increasingly, taxpayers go to their municipal websites to find up-to-date information on issues affecting towns, including legal notices.

3. REPEAL THE EVICTED TENANTS PROPERTY STORAGE MANDATE

I support passage of HB-5295 which will eliminate the mandate on towns to pay for the storage of a landlord's evicted tenants' possessions. Storage costs can add up, even in small towns. It also requires the town to inventory the items and maintain records. It doesn't make sense to inject towns into what is a private transaction between the landlord and the tenant.

In addition to these issues, I encourage committee members to explore opportunities to enact meaningful mandate relief to provide towns with the tools to manage our budgets.

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